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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EUR-12 /081 W
----------150848Z 044849 /11
R 150725Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5733
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0222

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PINS SEDU SF
SUBJ: SAG TO DISCUSS CHURCH SCHOOL INTEGRATION WITH CATHOLIC LEADERS

REF: CAPE TOWN 0114

SUMMARY: SAG AND ROMAN CATHOLIC/ANGLICAN CHURCHES ARE NOW MOVING TOWARD JOINT EFFORT TO FIND A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE ADMISSION OF NON-WHITES TO PREVIOUSLY ALL-WHITE CHURCH SCHOOLS. ANGLICAN LEADERS IN MEETING WITH MINED KOORNHOF AND CAPE ADMINISTRATOR MUNNIK AGREED THAT CHURCH REPS AND PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICIALS WOULD CONDUCT JOINT STUDY OF "LEGAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS" OF ADMITTING ALL RACES TO ANGLICAN SCHOOLS. ON FEB. 2 MUNNIK ISSUED PUBLIC WARNING THAT "CERTAIN SCHOOLS" COULD NOT CONTINUE TO DEFY AUTHORITY BUT SEVERAL DAYS LATER ISSUED STATE-MENTS REFERRING TO "FEASIBILITY STUDY" BEING DONE WITH ANGLICANS AND SAYING HE WOULD BE WILLING TO DO THE SAME WITH CATHOLIC LEADERS IF THEY APPROACHED HIM. CATHOLIC
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BISHOPS CONFERENCE MEETING IN PRETORIA ISSUED STATEMENT FEB. 9 SAYING THAT CHURCH LOOKED FORWARD TO "CONSTRUC-TIVE" TALKS WITH MINED AND CAPE AND TRANSVAAL ADMIN-ISTRATORS BUT THAT CHURCH COULD NOT GO BACK ON DECISIONS ALREADY TAKEN. CARDINAL MCCANN TOLD AMBASSADOR FEB. 11 THAT HE HAS WRITTEN TO MUNNIK REQUESTING MEETING. HE THOUGHT SOLUTION WOULD BE FOUND BECAUSE GOVERNMENT

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DID NOT WANT TO CLOSE RC SCHOOLS. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING THEIR JAN. 24 MEETING ON QUESTION OF ADMISSION OF BLACK STUDENTS TO CHURCH SCHOOLS (REFTEL), EDMIN PIET KOORNHOF, CAPE ADMINISTRATOR L. A. MUNNIK AND ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP BILL BURNETT MET AGAIN ON FEB. 1 AND DECIDED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF CAPE PROVINCE EDUCATION DEPT. AND FIVE ANGLICAN SCHOOLS WOULD BEGIN SERIES OF MEETINGS TO CONSIDER "LEGAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS" OF ADMISSION OF PUPILS OF ALL RACES TO PRIVATE ANGLICAN SCHOOLS. IN NEXT FEW DAYS MUNNIK APPEARED TO BE TAKING HARDER LINE, DENOUNCING "PROVOCATIVE" ATTITUDE OF "SOME PRIVATE SCHOOLS" AND WARNING THAT THEY AHD NO RIGHT TO DEFY AUTHORITY. AT SAME TIME, CAPE EDUCATION DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED CIRCULAR LETTER HAD BEEN SENT TO ALL PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASKING FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT ALL PUPILS, INCLUDING INDICATION OF RACE.

2. ON FEB. 6 MUNNIK ISSUED ANOTHER STATEMENT WHICH WHILE CHARGING CATHOLIC CHURCH WITH DELIBERATELY AND UNILATER-ALLY CREATING "CONFRONTATION SITUATION," EXPRESSED WILL-INGNESS TO MEET AN RC DELEGATION "IF THEY APPROACH ME" AND TO CARRY OUT FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR RC SCHOOLS SIMILAR TO THAT BEING DONE FOR ANGLICAN SCHOOLS.

3. A DISCORDANT NOTE WAS MOMENTARILY AND SURPRISINGLY INTERJECTED BY ANNOUNCEMENT FEB. 8 IN WINDHOEK THAT R24,000 (R1.00 - $1.15) ANNUAL SUBSIDY TO RC SCHOOLS BY SOUTH WEST AFRICA ADMINISTRATION WAS BEING WITHDRAWN
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BECAUSE SCHOOLS THERE HAD DEFIED THE LAW BY ADMITTING NON-WHITES. THERE WAS NO TALK, HOWEVER, OF CLOSING THE SCHOOLS AND IMPACT OF ACTION WAS NEGATED BY OFFER FROM RC CHURCH IN WEST GERMANY TO MAKE UP THE SUBSIDY.

4. THE OLIVE BRANCH GRUDGINGLY EXTENDED BY MUNNIK WAS ACCEPTED, AT LEAST PARTIALLY, BY CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE AT CONSLUSION ITS MEETING IN PRETORIA. AT PRESS CONFERENCE FEB. 9, ARCHBISHOP HURLEY OF NATAL, CHAIRMAN OF CHURCH'S EDUCATION COMMITTEE, SAID THE CHURCH LOOKED FORWARD TO "CONSTRUCTIVE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS" WITH MINED AND CAPE AND TRANSVAAL ADMINISTRA-TORS. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT "WE CANNOT GO BACK" ON DECISIONS ALREADY TAKEN "ON PRINCIPLE OF OPENING OUR SCHOOLS TO CHILDREN OF ALL RACES." ASKED ABOUT REPORTS OF OBJECTIONS BY BLACKS TO THE CHURCH'S DECISION, HURLEY REPORTEDLY ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WAS A VARIETY OF OPINION, WITH SOME FEELING THE DECISION WAS IRRELEVANT TO THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

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WHILE OTHERS REGARDED IT AS A BREAKTHROUGH. HE ADDED
THAT THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ADOPTED AT THE CON-
FERENCE (BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY) PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN
OF POOR PARENTS TO BE ADMITTED AND HE EXPECTED THE
NUMBERS TO INCREASE NEXT YEAR WHEN CHURCH'S NEW
BURSARY SCHEME IS IMPLEMENTED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0222

5. IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND CONGENOFF ON FEB. 11,
CARDINAL MCCANN SAID HE HAD WRITTEN TO MUNNIK ASKING
HIM TO RECEIVE CHURCH DELEGATION. ARCHBISHOP PRETORIUS
WAS MAKING SIMILAR EFFORT WITH TRANSVAAL ADMINISTRATOR
VAN NIERKERK IN PRETORIA. HE ANTICIPATED THAT MEETINGS
WOULD ULTIMATELY BE SUCCESSFUL, ADDING "WE MUST HELP
THEM FIND A WAY OUT." THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE
CHILDREN ALREADY ADMITTED BEING WITHDRAWN AND HE DID
NOT THINK GOVERNMENT WOULD INSIST ON IT BECAUSE IN LAST
ANALYSIS "I DON'T THINK THEY WILL CLOSE OUR SCHOOLS."
ON QUESTION OF NUMBERS OF NON-WHITE STUDENTS ALREADY
ENROLLED, THE CARDINAL SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WERE
"SOMEWHAT MORE" THAN 200. HE NOTED THAT FIVE
SCHOOLS IN NATAL HAD ALSO ADMITTED NON-WHITES, AND
THERE THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR HAD NOT ONLY TAKEN
NO ACTION, HE HAD SAID TO CATHOLIC OFFICIALS THAT, SO
FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, IT WAS "NOT AN ISSUE." ASKED
HOW HE ACCOUNTED FOR THE DIFFERENCE, THE CARDINAL
REPLIED HE "SUPPOSED" IT HAD TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT
UP CONTROLS THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL IN NATAL.

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TO DATE ADMINISTRATOR HAS NOT CONTRADICTED THE PROVINCIAL
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COUNCIL MEMBER WHO HOLDS EDUCATION PORTFOLIO, ROGER WHITELY (UP) WHO SAID RECENTLY NATAL HAS NO INTENTION OF "SNOOPING AROUND" PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND STARTING A "WITCH HUNT." AMBASSADOR TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO SAY THAT US WELCOMES THE INITIATIVE CHURCH HAS TAKEN TO INTEGRATE THEIR SCHOOLS.

6. ARCHBISHOP FITZGERALD RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF IN PRETORIA THAT THERE WAS NO OUTSIDE PRESSURE ON CHURCH TO INTEGRATE SCHOOLS. IT WAS SIMPLY "MATTER OF CONSCIENCE." ANY CHANGES PROPOSED WOULD BE SENT TO VATICAN FOR APPROVAL BUT INITIATIVE WAS LOCAL. IN TALKS WITH SAG, CHURCH WOULD STRESS ITS DESIRE TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AND HOPED SAG WOULD RESPOND, BUT CHURCH MUST BE ATTUNED "TO OUR MAJORITY - THE BLACKS" (SAID BY BISHOPS CONFERENCE SPOKESMAN TO BE 80 PERCENT OF CATHOLIC MEMBERSHIP).

7. SAG WOULD SEEM VERY RELUCTANT TO FORCE SHOWDOWN ON THIS ISSUE TO EXTENT OF CLOSING CHURCH SCHOOLS AND IS APPARENTLY SEEKING FORMULA WHICH, WHILE AVOIDING APPEARANCE OF BACKING DOWN IN FACE OF CHURCH DEFIANCE, WILL GIVE CHURCH MUCH, IF NOT ALL, OF WHAT IT SEEKS. WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILLING TO PERMIT STUDENTS ALREADY ENROLLED TO CONTINUE WHILE JOINT "STUDY" GOES FORWARD WILL BE KEY INDICATOR OF SAG FLEXIBILITY. IF SAG NOT WILLING PERMIT THIS, SHOWDOWN WOULD APPEAR TO BE UNAVOIDABLE.
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